



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



VA AND AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF KIDNEY PATIENTS FORM PARTNERSHIP

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs has announced a new partnership with the [American Association of Kidney Patients](#) to improve the everyday lives of veterans with kidney disease in coordination with the VA's [Kidney Medicine Program](#).

Through several new partnerships, the VA is poised to expand its range of services, educational resources, and testing capabilities for the one in six veterans who live with chronic kidney disease. Veterans with kidney disease experience fatigue, nausea, vomiting, swelling, and other painful symptoms, making it hard to sustain the quality of life that all veterans deserve.

The partnership helps address the unique needs of veterans with kidney disease by providing comprehensive support and resources to help them manage their condition, early detection and appropriate diagnosis, annual webinars focused on kidney health issues, education about the importance of nutrition and physical health and kidney disease prevention and management, and guidance on how to get the whole family involved in a team approach to reduce burdens and better impact outcomes.

"At the VA, it's our job to provide veterans with kidney disease with the world-class health care they deserve — and the best possible quality of life," said Deputy Executive Director of the Veterans Health Administration Kidney Medicine Program Dr. Paul Palevsky. "Working together with AAKP, we will increase understanding of kidney disease among the veteran community and improve awareness of the resources and benefits to which veterans with kidney disease are eligible."

For more information about VHA health partnerships, visit [VHA's National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnership](#).

Table of Contents

VA to Review Toxins	2
VA to Review Toxins	3
SDDVA Outreach	3
Upcoming Events	4-5

VA TO REVIEW POSSIBLE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TOXIC EXPOSURES AND ACUTE LEUKEMIA, CHRONIC LEUKEMIA AND MULTIPLE MYELOMA

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs has announced that it will conduct a scientific review to determine whether there is a relationship between three conditions — acute leukemias, chronic leukemias, and multiple myeloma outside of the head and neck — and toxic exposures for service members who deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Uzbekistan, and the entire [Southwest Asia theater of operations](#).

This scientific review will help the VA determine whether these conditions become presumptive conditions for veterans. When a condition is considered presumptive, eligible veterans do not need to prove that their service caused their disease to receive benefits for it; instead, the VA automatically assumes service-connection for the disease and provides benefits accordingly.

Although these conditions are not yet considered presumptive, it's important to note that the VA does not require a condition or location to be presumptive to grant benefits for it. When a veteran applies for benefits (in the absence of a presumptive condition), the VA considers their claim on a case-by-case basis and grants disability compensation benefits if sufficient evidence shows the veteran has a disability related to their military service. The VA encourages veterans who live with these conditions to apply for VA health care and benefits today.

Cancers of the head and neck are already considered presumptive under the PACT Act, so this research will focus solely on acute leukemias, chronic leukemias, and multiple myeloma originating outside of the head and neck.

These conditions were chosen for scientific review based on existing scientific data and close consultations with veterans, veteran service organizations, Congress, and other key stakeholders. While these are the first conditions to be announced for scientific review since the PACT Act passed into law, the VA will review many additional conditions moving forward.

(continued on next page)

VA TOXIC EXPOSURE STUDY

(CONTINUED)

In addition to codifying the new presumptive review process, the PACT Act added presumptives for more than 20 presumptive disease categories. Since the PACT Act was signed into law Aug. 10, the VA has delivered more than \$1.6 billion in PACT Act-related benefits to veterans and their survivors. Additionally:

- More than 700,000 veterans have applied for PACT Act-related benefits.
- More than four million veterans have received the new toxic exposure screening.
- More than 300,000 veterans have enrolled in VA health care (43,000 more enrollments than the same time frame last year, including 98,000 enrollees from the PACT Act target population).

The VA is soliciting public comment about this decision via the Federal Register. The public will have a 30-day period to provide comments. View the notice and submit comments [here](#).

The VA encourages all eligible veterans and survivors to file a claim — or submit their intent to file a claim — for PACT Act-related benefits now. Veterans who do so on or before Aug. 9 may have their benefits, if granted, backdated to Aug. 10, 2022.

For more information about the PACT Act and a full list of presumptive conditions covered under the law, visit [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT).

SDDVA PARTICIPATES IN LOCAL VETERAN OUTREACH

Kevin Swanson, field service officer for South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, attended an outreach event with the American Legion Post 20 in Fort Pierre.



During the program, Janet Beck, county veterans

service officer for Hughes, Stanley, and Sully Counties and CVSO Assistant Sheila Carpenter briefed veterans on VA benefits, the PACT Act, VA Healthcare, and travel reimbursement. Swanson briefed the veterans on both federal and state benefits.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Aug 6—American Legion Riders Post 71 Annual Fall River Freedom Ride—Begins at Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home—(2500 Minnekahta Avenue)—Hot Springs—9:00 am (MT)
- Aug 7—Purple Heart and Gold Star Family Appreciation Dinner—DeSmet Event Center—(705 Wilder Lane)—DeSmet—5:00 pm (CT)
- Aug 8—VA PACT Act Benefits and Healthcare Drive—Armory at the SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1700 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am to 1:30 pm and 4:00 to 6:30 pm (CT)
- Aug 10-11—South Dakota Suicide Prevention Conference—Sioux Falls Convention Center
- Aug 15—2nd Annual American Legion Auxiliary Unity 15 “Chip in for Vets” Golf Tournament—Elmwood Golf Course—(2604 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—Shotgun Start at 9:00 am (CT)
- Aug 19—SFVAHCS Show and Shine
- Aug 26—SD Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—LTC Gordon J. Lippman—St. Rose of Lima Community Hall—(305 Pine Street)—Hill City—2:00 pm (MT)
- Aug 27—SD Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—SP5 John P. Beckers—VFW (Main Street)—Burke—2:00 pm (CT)
- Aug 28—Barrel House Day of Giving for Midwest Honor Flight
- Aug 31—Veterans Day at the SD State Fair
- Aug 31—Sept 4—SD State Fair
- Sep 2—727th/DAV Poker Run—Dacotah Bank Center—(824 32nd Avenue)—Brookings—10:00 am (CT)
- Sep 4—State Offices Closed
- Sep 5—7—SDDVA Annual Benefit School—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls
- Sep 8-10—PVA North Central Chapter Trapshoot—Crooks Gun Club
- Sep 13-16—Black Hills Veterans March and Marathon
- Sep 15—SF Area Veterans Council POW/MIA Ceremony—Veterans Memorial Park—(1021 W. Bailey)—Sioux Falls—6:30 pm (CT)
- Sep 16—SD Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—LT Peter H. Monfore—Community Hall—(605 8th Street)—Springfield—2:00 pm (CT)
- Sep 18—Texas Roadhouse Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser—(Sioux Falls and Sioux City)—4:00 pm—9:00 pm (CT)
- Sep 20—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—Rapid City—9:00 am (MT)
- Sep 26—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 16
- Oct 7—SD Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—WO1 Roger S. Cameron—Community Building—(311 W. Main)—Pierpont—2:30 pm (CT)
- Oct 7—DAV Fall Conference—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls
- Oct 9—State Offices Closed
- Oct 10—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 17
- Oct 14—SD Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—1LT Thomas M. Martin—Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
- Oct 21—Elvis Night/50’s Dance Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls
- Nov 4—Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair—Sturgis Community Center—11:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)
- Nov 10—State Offices Closed
- Nov 13—Barrel House Day of Giving for SDVC Wreaths Across America

UPCOMING EVENTS (CONTINUED)

Nov 15—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—DAV Headquarters—(1519 W. 51st Street)—Sioux Falls—
9:00 am (CT)
Nov 15—South Dakota Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Sioux Falls
Nov 16—South Dakota Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Northeast
Nov 17—South Dakota Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Central
Nov 17—MINGO (Music Bingo) Fundraiser for Midwest Honor Flight—Severance Brewing Co.—(701 N. Phillips Ave-
nue—Suite 110)—Sioux Falls—6:00–9:00 pm (CT)
Nov 18—South Dakota Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—West River
Nov 23—State Offices Closed
Dec 16—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux
Falls—11:00 am (CT)
Dec 25—State Offices Closed

2024 Events

Jan 10—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—American Legion Post 8—(520 S. Pierre Street)—Pierre—
2:00 pm (CT)
Jan 10—SDDVA and South Dakota Veterans Council Legislative Reception—American Legion Post 8—(520 S. Pierre
Street)—Pierre— 5:30 pm (CT)
Feb 16—18—American Legion Mid-Winter Conference—Deadwood
Jun 20—23—American Legion State Conference—Pierre
Dec 14—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—
11:00 am (CT)

2025 Events

Feb 14—16—American Legion Mid-Winter Conference—Oacoma
Jun 19—22—American Legion State Conference—Huron
Dec 13—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—
11:00 am (CT)

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military <https://military.sd.gov/>
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov>
Soldiers and Sailors Building - 425 E Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-8242
E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us

